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Russell Walton

University of Wollongong, rwalton@uow.edu.au

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Abstract

Author biographies for Journal of Student Engagement: Education matters, 2 (1)



Author biographies

Megan Baker

Megan Baker is currently in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Communication and Media Studies/Bachelor of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. Completing a research paper in 2011, entitled 'International student stereotypes in media', as a part of her mandatory third-year subjects, she developed an interest in discourse theory and is absorbed in disguised cultural traces that highlight the constant tension between what we see and what lies hidden behind our social realities. Megan has pursued this topic within her art practices and has exhibited locally around the Illawarra. It is her wish to engage and generate public opinion on these issues and combine her academic interests with her art.

Megan Blight

Megan Blight is a student of the Bachelor for Primary Education Dean's Scholar Program at the University of Wollongong, currently undertaking her second year of study. In 2011 she was awarded one of the two academic scholarships for the university's faculty of education. From a young age she has desired to pursue a career in teaching and taken part in a vast array of children's work. Megan studied language throughout secondary school and participated in an overseas exchange program in her senior years. This experience of complete immersion in another culture demonstrated to her the significance of active global citizenship. She hopes to inspire her students to value diversity and to embrace interaction with other cultures.

Stephanie Chivers

Stephanie Chivers is a fourth-year student in Bachelor of Primary Education at the University of Wollongong. She has completed a Certificate in Special Education: Autism, conducted a Professional Experience in a special needs unit and volunteered in schools with ASPECT (Autism Australia). Whilst engaging in study and Professional Experience at University, an interest has developed for working with students with learning disabilities. However, she has always had an interest in gifted learning, as students challenge her knowledge and encourage her to use creativity in planning lessons and programming. This prompted Stephanie to conduct further research into twice-exceptionality and complete this research paper on the topic.

Amanda-Rita Gigliotti

Amanda-Rita Gigliotti graduated from the University of Wollongong with a Bachelor of Primary Education (Honours) in 2011. She has recently enrolled as a PhD student and begun working as a teacher in a local public primary school. Amanda thoroughly enjoys teaching and works as a tutor in a first year technology-based subject at Wollongong University. She has a passion for research, specifically in technology and



education, and she has made this area the focus of her PhD degree. Recently, Amanda has worked as a research assistant in the Faculty of Education with Sarah Howard on the DER-NSW laptop program. Shirley Agostinho and Sue Bennett are Amanda's supervisors for the duration of her PhD degree.

Chloe Gordon

Chloe Gordon is a fourth-year Bachelor of Primary Education student at the University of Wollongong. Chloe is currently undertaking her Honours research, with Dr Sharon Tindall-Ford and Dr Shirley Agostinho as her supervisors. Her research is based in Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) and will examine how students can self-manage their cognitive load to improve learning outcomes. Chloe is particularly interested in encouraging critical thinking in students and supporting their academic, social, emotional and spiritual development.

Ediva Hong

Ediva Hong is currently entering in her second year of a Bachelor of Primary Education at the University of Wollongong. During her first year, studying the psychological aspect of education interested her greatly and led to her desire to further examine the contribution of parenting styles, a main contributor to children's development in schools. Ultimately, by acquiring a greater understanding of the growth of children, she aims to be able to facilitate the learning of each and every child to bring out the best of their potentials. With a passion for helping others, undertaking an education course is most ideal in making a difference in the world.

Lauren Liberante

Lauren Liberante is a second-year undergraduate student currently studying for a Bachelor of Primary Education. Lauren chose this degree because of the positive impact she aspires to have on young children. Since a young age she saw teaching as a 'job' that she would love to do, however this became a passion, which she desired to fulfil. During her own Primary school years, the teachers that taught Lauren had a great impact in her life. They were always supportive and assisted her in every way possible, and although Lauren doesn't necessarily remember everything her teachers taught her, she remembers the way in which they made her feel. Lauren hopes to be a powerful role model much like the teachers that taught her. She endeavours to provide for the needs of all her students, so that all individuals are given the opportunity to learn to their fullest potential, in an environment in which they feel supported and valued.

Kylie Moore

Kylie Moore is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Primary Education degree, fourth year, through the University of Wollongong. As a mature-age student she has also completed a Diploma of Children's Services in 2006. She has utilised these qualifications by committing herself to volunteering in numerous childcare centres



and working alongside primary school based children in tutoring for English and Mathematics. Having been motivated and present in a variety of children services, it is her objective to continue to work within the education system. Her desire is to continue to focus on her passion to ensure children have an equal and positive education to in turn give them the right step in their future. She intends to do this by continuing to research and put into practice inclusive teaching strategies and promote a classroom environment that is safe, enriched with accessible resources all while developing her own teaching pedagogy.

Sarah Murray

Sarah Murray is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Primary Education degree at Wollongong University, in her fourth year of study. During her degree at Wollongong University she has completed numerous roles in volunteered teacher's aide work, private tutoring and she has also completed her Diploma of Special education (Autism Spectrum disorder). Her experience in numerous schools and different environments has increased her passion to create a classroom where students are celebrated for their differences and in turn their own personal achievements. She wishes to do this by making the learning environment safe and accessible to all students to ensure that students strive to achieve their personal best and beyond.

Lara Sheils

Lara Sheils completed her Bachelor of Primary Education degree in 2011 and graduated with Class 1 Honours. From youth Lara was always interested in reading and literature, therefore an honours thesis within the Literacy strand therefore seemed to be the most logical area in which to work. Lara is passionate about contributing knowledge that will benefit both teachers and students alike, and aims to assist students to develop the skills that will enable them to successfully operate in their futures. Her research into reading and viewing strategies for meaning making purposes allowed her to contribute to this professional knowledge. Lara's supervisors throughout the honours year were Dr Barbra McKenzie and Dr Sarah O'Shea.

Alyce Shepherd

Alyce Shepherd is a doctoral student at the University of Wollongong. In 2011 Alyce graduated from the University of Wollongong with a Bachelor of Primary Education (Honours, Class 1). Upon graduation Alyce was awarded the 2011 University of Wollongong Medal for the Faculty of Education. Alyce's Honours research focused on animated social narratives as a social skills intervention for students with mild intellectual disabilities. Through her PhD research Alyce aims to extend her honours studies in the fields of special education and technology, specifically in relation to animated social narratives and student-generated multimodal learning.



Jessica Tougher

Jessica is studying at the University of Wollongong to become a primary school teacher, currently in her second year. She has always enjoyed the company of children and is passionate about making a difference. Jessica loves the thought of being involved in the education of children and their developing perception of the world. In the progression of her degree, Jessica has found that she enjoys writing and researching for all of her university assignments and tasks but, at this stage, does not wish to pursue the life of an academic. Rather, she wants to be in the heart of teaching – the classroom. Seeing the proud look on a student's face when you see they comprehend what you, as a teacher, are trying to convey, motivates Jessica to finish her degree and become a full-time teacher. She hopes to find a full-time teaching position and become an important part of my students' lives; teaching and preparing them for their adult life. Jessica is already considering becoming an honours student in the future, both for the experience and to broaden her opportunities within the workforce.

Krystle Marie Valerio

Krystle Marie Valerio is in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Primary Education at the University of Wollongong. She is studying education because she has always been curious about how we learn. What Krystle enjoys most about this degree is the joy she receives from knowing she can contribute to the development of a child. Having a diploma in children services, Krystle is aware of the influence formal education, as well as a teacher's passion and enthusiasm, can have upon a child's learning. When Krystle gains her qualification in Primary Education she wishes to bring to the classroom her own passion and love for learning. Krystle hopes to create a safe learning environment where all children feel challenged yet successful in their learning.

Kelsey Wall

Kelsey Wall is studying a Bachelor of Primary Education at the University of Wollongong and is currently completing her fourth year of the course. Her beliefs, values and attitudes that underpin her interest in the education system stem from ideals of quality and effective teaching that engage all children. Her research into the field of Indigenous education recognises that while no school in the current education paradigm is perfect, it is possible and necessary to continually explore novel and effective means of challenging these problems.